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DRAFTED BY: RP/AAA:M M LANGE:MML
APPROVED BY: P:P.TARNOFF
P:E BRIMMER, RP:B MCKINLEY, IO:M L KIMBLE
S/S:GTDAVIES
S/S-O:SEEISENBRAUN

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R 240554Z MAY 94
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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GENEVA FOR RMA

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PREF, RW, HA, YO
SUBJECT: UNHCR OGATA'S MEETING WITH P TARNOFF

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1. SUMMARY. DURING A MAY 13 CALL ON UNDER SECRETARY
TARNOFF, UNHCR OGATA REVIEWED SOME OF UNHCR'S MAJOR
PROGRAMS AND DISCUSSED POLITICAL CONCERNS AFFECTING
REFUGEE OPERATIONS. THE PRIMARY AREAS DISCUSSED WERE
HAITI, RWANDA AND BOSNIA. OGATA WAS PLEASED WITH THE
CHANGE IN USG POLICY TOWARDS HAITIAN ASYLUM SEEKERS AND
OFFERED UNHCR'S ASSISTANCE IN SETTING UP A CREDIBLE
PROTECTION SYSTEM FOR POTENTIAL REFUGEES. REGARDING THE
PROTECTION OF PEOPLE AT RISK IN RWANDA, OGATA STRESSED
THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING A CEASEFIRE BETWEEN THE GOR

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AND RPF AND OF ENSURING THAT ANY UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE BE SEEN AS NON-PARTISAN. ON BOSNIA, OGATA WAS CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE RETALIATION FOR AIRSTRIKES ON CIVILIAN POPULATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) SADAKO OGATA CALLED ON UNDERSECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS PETER TARNOFF ON MAY 13. OGATA WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SOREN JESSEN-PETERSEN AND FRANCOIS FOUINAT FROM UNHCR/GENEVA AND RENE VAN ROOYEN FROM UNHCR/WASHINGTON. INCLUDED FROM

THE DEPARTMENT WERE P SPECIAL ASSISTANT ESTHER BRIMMER, RP DAS BRUNSON MCKINLEY, IO DAS MELINDA KIMBLE, AND RP NOTETAKER MARY LANGE.

HAITI

3. TARNOFF OPENED THE DISCUSSION WITH UNHCR OGATA, WELCOMING HER BACK TO WASHINGTON AND ASKING HOW HER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEETINGS, ESPECIALLY THE ONE WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON, HAD GONE. OGATA FELT THAT MEETINGS ON ALL LEVELS HAD BEEN PRODUCTIVE, AND THAT HER VISIT WITH THE PRESIDENT WAS PARTICULARLY TIMELY IN LIGHT OF THE USG POLICY CHANGE REGARDING HAITIAN ASYLUM SEEKERS. SHE SAID THAT THE US DECISION TO REINSTATE REFUGEE SCREENING PRIOR TO REPATRIATION WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS BETTER PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF POTENTIAL REFUGEES; IT WAS ALSO AN IMPORTANT SYMBOL TO OTHER COUNTRIES WHO LOOK UPON THE US AS A LEADER ON REFUGEE POLICY. OGATA RECOGNIZED THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE USG IN SETTING UP A CREDIBLE PROTECTION SYSTEM WHILE TRYING TO AVOID CREATING A PULL FACTOR, AND SAID THAT ESTABLISHING HOLDING CENTERS IN THIRD COUNTRIES MIGHT BE A BETTER APPROACH THAN SCREENING FOR RESETTLEMENT. SHE RECOUNTED UNHCR'S EFFORTS IN 1991 TO PROVIDE HAITIANS WITH ASYLUM IN PLACES SUCH AS VENEZUELA AND SURINAME, SAYING THAT MOST ASYLUM SEEKERS PREFERRED TO RETURN TO HAITI ONCE IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD NOT REACH THE US. WHILE HAITIAN BOAT PEOPLE LEAVING TODAY MIGHT MAKE THAT SAME CHOICE, OGATA STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING ASYLUM SEEKERS OF PROTECTION SO LONG AS GENERALIZED VIOLENCE IN HAITI CONTINUES.

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4. UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING AN INTERNATIONAL APPROACH TO THE ISSUE OF HAITIAN ASYLUM SEEKERS, AND PARTICULARLY WELCOMED UNHCR'S ROLE IN BOTH THE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE OF POTENTIAL REFUGEES. OGATA ASSURED TARNOFF THAT UNHCR STOOD READY TO HELP AS BEST IT COULD.

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RWANDA

5. TURNING TO RWANDA, UNDER SECRETARY TARNOFF ASKED UNHCR OGATA FOR HER VIEWS ON HOW TO PROTECT RWANDANS

STILL AT RISK WITHIN THAT COUNTRY. OGATA SAID THAT UNHCR IS CURRENTLY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO SOME 860,000 RWANDAN AND BURUNDI REFUGEES IN THE REGION. THESE OPERATIONS, FOR THE MOST PART, ARE RUNNING SMOOTHLY. OGATA WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT RWANDANS AS WELL AS BURUNDI REFUGEES (80,000) STILL BEHIND GOVERNMENT LINES INSIDE RWANDA. WHEN ASKED HER THOUGHTS ON WHERE A UN PROTECTIVE FORCE WAS MOST NEEDED, OGATA AGREED THAT THE AREA FROM THE BUTARE REGION TO THE BURUNDI BORDER HARBORED THE MOST AT-RISK PEOPLE AND THAT THIS WOULD BE LOGICAL PLACE TO DEPLOY UN TROOPS. HOWEVER, BEFORE SENDING TROOPS INTO THE AREA, OGATA STRESSED THAT THE AGREEMENT OF BOTH THE GOR AND THE RPF, AS WELL AS NEIGHBORING GOVERNMENTS, WAS REQUIRED.

6. TARNOFF TOLD OGATA THAT THE ROLE OF THE US IN SUPPORTING PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEMAKING OPERATIONS HAS BEEN THE TOPIC OF MUCH DISCUSSION BOTH WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION AND WITHIN CONGRESS. USING RWANDA AS AN EXAMPLE, BOTH OGATA AND TARNOFF AGREED THAT ANY UN FORCE DECIDED UPON MUST BE CREDIBLE BOTH IN TERMS OF SIZE AND IN TERMS OF RULES OF ENGAGEMENT, OGATA SAID THAT IT WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO KNOW, BEFORE GOING IN, WHETHER A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE WOULD BE OPERATING UNDER CHAPTER VI OR CHAPTER VII RULES OF ENGAGEMENT. OGATA HERSELF

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ADVOCATED CHAPTER VI OPERATIONS AS MORE NEUTRAL AND IN
KEEPING WITH NON-PARTISAN HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS.

BOSNIA

7. TURNING TO THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA, OGATA EXPRESSED HER CONCERN ABOUT THE EFFECT OF AIRSTRIKES ON HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS. SHE AGREED THAT THE STRIKES MAY SUCCEED IN ENDING THE WAR, BUT COULD EQUALLY RESULT IN RETALIATIONS AGAINST CIVILIAN POPULATIONS. TARNOFF SHARED OGATA'S CONCERN BUT STRESSED THAT THE DECISION TO SUPPORT AIRSTRIKES WAS CORRECT, GIVEN THE STALEMATE IN PEACETALKS AND THE CONTINUED SHELLING OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS. OGATA ASSURED TARNOFF THAT SHE WAS NOT AGAINST AIRSTRIKES, BUT WAS CONCERNED THAT UNHCR HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED OR NOTIFIED PRIOR TO THE DECISION BEING MADE. TARNOFF POINTED OUT THAT UNPROFOR HAD BEEN NOTIFIED AND HAD APPROVED THE ACTION, AND THAT UNPROFOR SHOULD HAVE INCLUDED UNHCR IN ITS APPROVAL PROCESS.

8. TARNOFF AND OGATA ALSO DISCUSSED THE RECENTLY ISSUED GENEVE MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUE ON CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES (ISSUED THE SAME DAY) WHICH, TARNOFF SAID, PUT MILITARY ACTION IN THE CONTEXT OF FUTHERING NEGOTIATIONS. TARNOFF FELT THAT THIS COMMUNIQUE OFFERED A SOLID AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO A SOLUTION TO THE BOSNIA CRISIS, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE BOSNIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE OTHER PARTIES WOULD ACCEPT IT AS A BASIS FOR A TERRITORIAL SOLUTION TO THE BOSNIAN DILEMMA.

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9. OGATA SPOKE BRIEFLY ABOUT THE MORALE OF UNHCR STAFF WORKING IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA. SHE SAID THAT WHILE MORALE OF UNHCR STAFF WAS CURRENTLY GOOD, UNHCR HAD SUFFERED A DEVASTATING BLOW WITH THE BREAKDOWN OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS LAST AUGUST. SHE HAD BEEN READY TO GIVE-UP AND PULL OUT OF BOSNIA, BUT WITH WINTER COMING SOON, THEY COULD NOT ABANDON THOSE IN NEED. OGATA FELT THAT UNHCR'S ABILITY TO KEEP PEOPLE ALIVE THROUGH TWO WINTERS HAD TRULY BEEN A MIRACLE, BUT WORRIED ABOUT UNHCR'S ABILITY TO MANAGE THROUGH ANOTHER WINTER IF THE CONFLICT CONTINUES. TARNOFF ASSURED OGATA OF CONTINUED US SUPPORT FOR THE

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EFFORTS OF UNHCR. HE THANKED HER FOR THE WORK THAT UNHCR
HAD DONE, SAYING THAT THE AGENCY HAD MADE A TREMENDOUS
DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE IN THE REGION.

CHRISTOPHER

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